

## Facing the Void

by Felecia Chizuko Carlisle

### **Absenteeism**

Magnus Sigurdarson

Dimensions Variable

171 NE 38th Street, Miami, Florida 33137

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I am constantly thinking about being in a recessive economy and how my art practice will survive through it. I am profoundly amazed at the consistency in finding myself pushing the same Sisyphian rock over and over again. But, I have to ask myself what else to do with the rock. I could try throwing it over the hill with a giant slingshot, instead?

The work of Magnus Sigurdarson at Dimensions Variable asks a similar question about how artists break the logic of always climbing that hill. "Absenteeism" deals with the personal trials of being in a situation that all artists find themselves in at some point in their studio practice. That is, finding one's self staring at a metaphorical "blank canvas" and wondering what to do.

Canvas stretchers and empty frames fill the void of all four white walls in the gallery at Dimensions Variable. These objects serve as stand-ins for a universal and unrelenting form of "absence" for an artist, the lack of ideas. Although Sigurdarson suggests in his statement that this work is personal, the little truths that are expressed here seem to add up to an accessible sense of the collective and human condition. The lack of ideas for an artist thus becomes a metaphor for the same existential void that we all inevitably face at least once during our life times.

A friend of mine often speaks of "looking for the struggle" in art, to seek what the artist is going through in order to understand the work. According to Sigurdarson, his work expresses a feeling of "severe disconnect" with himself. In order to understand it more deeply, one might acknowledge these words. Clearly, he found a solution in allowing that distance to become his subject. The project mirrors a simple truth about being alive. Whether the struggle is psychological or physical, as long as we continue pushing against "the rock," we are assured hope of survival. "Absenteeism" reflects honestly on the state of being fully engaged in the struggle by heroically tackling the void, rather than giving in to its vast, hopeless, emptiness.

~Felecia Chizuko Carlisle

Images: Installation view. Courtesy Dimensions Variable.

Posted by [Felecia Chizuko Carlisle](#) on 7/24/11 | tags: [conceptual](#)

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#### absenteeism

The artist has a unique approach to absenteeism, of not being there. The viewer has no canvas just empty space around the contours of frames. The painting no longer can cover anything, but in today's market, it is very cost effective. Well done,

Comment by: [barb greene mann](#) on Tuesday 08/02/11 at 01:56 AM

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